



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

## Senator Johnson Announces Blueprint for Smarter, Safer NY Infrastructure

CRAIG M. JOHNSON June 27, 2010

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION, HIGHWAYS**



*Legislative Package to Improve Quality of Life for Communities Statewide, Enact Cost-Savings Passes Senate*

A comprehensive strategy to build safer roads and highways on Long Island and across New York State, which will cut costs for municipalities and improve the quality of life for all residents, passed the State Senate, Senator Craig M. Johnson, (D-Nassau), announced.

This legislative package will help communities put into motion:

- Transportation enhancements that improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers, regardless of age or ability.
- Healthier lifestyles through alternative transportation methods.
- Solutions to urban sprawl.
- Preservation of natural resources.

“This is a blueprint that will help Long Island and the rest of New York State plan better and plan smarter,” Senator Johnson said. “I am proud of this legislative package, which will help make Long Island more pedestrian friendly, less congested and more environmentally sustainable.”

### **‘Complete Streets’**

Complete Streets legislation (S5711B) directs the Transportation Department to consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in the planning and development of state, county, and local transportation facilities and programs. The power remains in the hands of municipalities to determine if and what planning is appropriate given their specific needs.

Accommodations would include measures such as bicycle lanes, lane striping and paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists, as well as crosswalks, pedestrian control signals, curb cuts, ramps and the sharing of road signage, .

This legislation is as an opportunity to improve health conditions for those who choose walking or bike riding as an alternative to driving. According to a 2009 national report, Dangerous by Design, New York State had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number in the nation for pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people aged 65 and older.

## **Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act**

The State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act (S5560B) outlines requirements for state infrastructure agencies to fund infrastructure projects in accordance with smart growth criteria. These agencies will have to ensure that public funding is granted for construction projects which use, maintain, or improve existing infrastructures and protect natural resources. New construction projects will also have to adhere to smart growth principles.

Smart Growth planning promotes economic development while preserving natural lands, protecting water and air quality, and reusing already-developed land. This means reinvesting in existing infrastructure, reclaiming historic buildings and revitalizing New York's communities.

## **Universal Design**

This legislation, (S6819), allows for building permit fee reductions for houses that are universally designed to be accessible and adaptable. People with physical disabilities and the elderly would especially benefit from this new legislation that will help them age in place.

This bills were major priorities of the Long Island Lobby Coalition, a collection of groups and organizations that advocate for legislation to improve the quality of life for Long Island residents.

Eric Alexander, Executive Director, Vision Long Island said: "The Complete Streets bill and the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Act will support Long Island's downtown revitalization through prioritized infrastructure investment and revised design for walkability along our roadways. This bill package will bring about a reversal in NYS policy and practice, sharply curtailing sprawl by limiting the use of public funds while incentivizing Smart Growth development. Long Island's over 100 planned or approved Smart Growth projects will substantively benefit from these policy

changes.”

Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign said: “A state complete streets policy is absolutely necessary to meet the transportation demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Safer routes for walkers, cyclists, transit users, and drivers will reduce needless traffic deaths, create livable and thriving communities, and provide New Yorkers with more environmentally-sound transportation options.”

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment said: “We are delighted this legislation is advancing and excited that it will provide for healthier, happier communities throughout New York. Future growth that incorporates planning designs to reduce our reliance on personal vehicles and instead encourages sustainability through walkable, bikeable communities that are safe for residents of all ages is just smart legislation.”

Peter Fleischer, Executive Director, Empire State Future said, “This is an exciting day for New York. These initiatives will meaningfully advance the cause of better communities. By aligning public infrastructure expenditures with smart growth criteria we will begin to set New York on a path toward environmental and economic sustainability. The "Smart Growth" bill will help ensure that these limited infrastructure funds become investments that lead to a more prosperous future.